

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

POLICY DECISION

**POLICY TITLE: Mainstem Columbia River
Spring Chinook Management and
Allocation for Non-Indian Fisheries, 2008**

POLICY NUMBER: C-3617

Supersedes: C-3615

Effective Date: February 8, 2008

Termination Date: December 31, 2008

See Also: Amendment to Delegation of Authority
and ATTACHMENT #1, adopted
February 14, 2008.

Approved by: , Chair
Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission

Guiding Principles

- The Department serves as the trustee of this public resource and as such is responsible and accountable for sustainable fisheries.
- Conservation and recovery are the highest priorities and will take precedence in managing the resource.
- The Department will comply with the provisions of the U.S. v Oregon Management Agreement for upriver spring Chinook.
- Tradeoffs between current harvest benefits and long-term stock well-being will be resolved in favor of the long-term stock well-being.
- The Department must be consistent with prescribed recovery measures in National Marine Fisheries Service Biological Opinions, and safeguard the health and viability of all salmon stocks as a precondition for harvest.
- Manage harvest to meet hatchery goals.
- The Department must meet conservation requirements for wild spring Chinook and wild winter steelhead, including populations listed under the federal Endangered Species Act.
- The Department will manage harvest consistent with the applicable recovery management objectives.

Selective Fishery and Enforcement Guidelines

- All fishers will comply with selective fisheries rules and standards.
- The Department will continue to make improvements in the selectivity of recreational and commercial fishery gear through research and feasibility studies.
- The Department will develop and implement a strategy for public communications and outreach on compliance issues.
- The Department will continue to pursue strategies to enhance enforcement efforts and successful prosecution through the use of observer programs, increased enforcement presence, and cooperative work with local prosecutors.
- The Commission expects recreational and commercial fishing sectors to demonstrate responsibility for continuous learning and skills development for selective harvest practices.

Stakeholders Visioning Process

- The Commission supports the Stakeholder Group process in 2008 to assist in development of policy recommendations for 2009 and beyond.
- The Commission recommends that the Stakeholder Group provide incentives for sectors that reduce release mortalities.
- The Commission recommends that the Stakeholder Group include stronger penalties for those fishers that have repeat violations of selective fishery rules.

Fisheries Management Objectives

- The Department will manage the mainstem Columbia River spring Chinook fisheries to limit the wild winter steelhead impact to less than 2%.
- The Department will exercise in-season management flexibility to utilize the non-Indian upriver spring Chinook impact allocation to meet the objectives of both fisheries, i.e., upriver impact sharing adjustments in response to in-season information pertaining to catch and run size.
- Adjustments to the sport fishery may occur in-season if it is estimated the fishery will not continue through April. In-season adjustments may include such options as days/week and area closures.
- The Department will recognize the economic benefits of recreational and commercial fisheries in the Columbia River.
- The Department will provide for sport fisheries throughout the Columbia River downstream of McNary Dam, sport/tribal fisheries in the Snake River and upper Columbia River, and commercial and sport fisheries in select areas, as well as in the mainstem below Bonneville Dam.
- The Department will ensure broad geographic distribution of the sport fishing opportunity in the main-stem Columbia River.
- Harvestable Lower Columbia River spring Chinook should provide opportunity to areas below the Willamette River.
- Extend sportfishing opportunity as far into April as possible downstream of Bonneville Dam.
- Utilize days of the week as a management tool.

Allocation of Upriver Spring Chinook Impacts

The Director shall manage Columbia River non-Indian spring Chinook fisheries that are covered by the allowable ESA upriver impact rate (currently 2%) based on the following allocation guidelines. The recreational fishery allocation should be 65% of the allowable impact rate with the remainder to the commercial fishery.

Delegation of Authority

The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission delegates the authority to the Director, through the Columbia River Compact process, to set seasons for sport and commercial fisheries in the Columbia River consistent with C-3617 Attachment #1, "2008 Management Measure Recommendations to the Columbia River Compact Process," and to adopt permanent and emergency regulations to implement these fisheries. The Director shall work with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to achieve implementation of this Commission action in a manner that results in concurrent regulations between the two states. The Director shall consult with the Commission if it becomes necessary to deviate from the Commission's Policy to achieve concurrent regulations with Oregon.

C-3617
ATTACHMENT #1

2008 Management Measure
Recommendation to the Columbia River Compact Process

Fishery Management Objectives

- The pre-season structure will be designed based on a 61% allocation of the ESA impacts to the sport fishery and 39% allocated to the commercial fishery.
- For the Lower Main-stem below the Willamette River, provide a 12 consecutive day recreational fishery in late March and early April, and a one fish bag limit as a buffer against management uncertainty.
- For the Upper Main-Stem above Willamette River, provide a March 16 – April 30 recreational fishery, six days per week (Wednesday through Monday), and a one fish bag limit as a buffer against management uncertainty.
- For the main-stem commercial fishery, restrict the fishery to the upper-river and establish a total catch objective of 6,800 fish. Prior to April 30, manage the commercial fishery to total catch of 5,200 fish as a buffer against management uncertainty.
- After April 30, additional fishing opportunity for the recreational and/or the commercial fishery will be based on a 61%-39% allocation of the available ESA impacts.

Buffer

- Reserve 10% of the allowable ESA impacts
 - 75% of the buffer will be reserved from the commercial fishery through managing the total catch to a level that is 76% of the total catch objective.
 - 25% of the buffer will be reserved from the sport fishery through the use a one fish bag limit.
- Half of the buffer may be used inseason for the sport fishery to meet the upper river's season management objective of April 30.
- Half of the buffer will be held as a precautionary measure until the inseason run size update is completed to ensure that our conservation objective is met.

Catch Projections

Upper River recreational Main-Stem

15,800 fish kept

Lower River

2,950 total kept catch. 2,250 upriver fish, 450 Willamette fish 250 Cowlitz, Kalama, Lewis fish

Commercial Fishery – Mainstem

Before Buffer: 6,800 upriver fish kept (@ 18.5% mortality)

With Buffer: 5,200 upriver fish kept (@ 18.5% mortality)